

**HENRY EDWARD MANNING:
FROM LAVINGTON TO WESTMINSTER**

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The Ven. James Garbett, Manning's successor as Archdeacon of Chichester, delivered his Primary Visitation Charge on 5 August 1851, only a few months after the future Cardinal's reception into the Catholic Church.² The topic and title of his first Charge were not unexpected: *The Church of England and the Church of Rome*. It aimed at reassuring his hearers, shaken by Manning's secession, about the position of the Anglican Church.

Garbett did not want to pass over the cause of so much sorrow and perplexity. He introduced the main argument of his Charge with some eloquent remarks about the 'falling away of one so honoured'. He was generous in his praise, and his words are perhaps the most eloquent description ever written of Henry Edward Manning's accomplishments. They sounded like a panegyric on the death of a well-loved man, but then, for many of his hearers, Manning had suffered a fate worse than death.

'It would have been a[s] consoling, as it is now a melancholy task to call to mind the gifts with which, among his fellows, he was marked out for distinction, as an instrument of God's service in times of difficulty, reproach, and blasphemy. And he was *so* marked. Who among us has not been touched by his natural elevation of thought and feeling? Who has not acknowledged the power of that intellect, at once so comprehensive and so subtle, with its craving after logical completeness in all things, and that union of imagination and reason, ever pressing on the brink of the mysterious and unseen, which is dangerous indeed, but surely grave and admirable. Above all, none that have known him can forget that versatility and universal sympathy through which

¹ The complex history of the Manning Papers has meant that, at present, some of Manning's letters, diaries, and other personal papers are only accessible through Purcell's or Lesley's biographies of the Cardinal.

² Garbett had been fellow of Brasenose College (1825–36). From 1835 until his death in 1879 he was incumbent of Clayton-cum-Keymer, Sussex. The new Archdeacon had inflicted the first severe defeat on Tractarian hopes at Oxford in the 1841–42 contest for the Poetry Professorship. On that occasion, Manning had not wanted to vote against Garbett: 'one of our clergy' and a friend (Manning to Pusey, 27 Nov. 1841, *Manning MSS Bod.*, c. 654, fos 179–80. Bodleian Library, Oxford). Garbett was appointed Archdeacon by the anti-Tractarian Bishop Gilbert, who, as principal of Brasenose, had supported him for the Poetry Professorship.

each man's thoughts and sentiments, not by art but by great felicity of nature, found an echo in his; and those almost divine gifts of persuasion, which in our times have clothed no other lips but his own. Add to this, tenacity of purpose and capacity for labour, and you will estimate what nature and diligent cultivation had made him. And now these gifts and manifold endowments adorn the ranks of our enemies, and are devoted to the destruction of the Church which nursed and honoured them.³

The Young Rector of Lavington

The connexion of Henry Edward Manning with the diocese of Chichester had started on 5 January 1833, when he arrived at Lavington from his fellowship at Merton College, Oxford, to serve as curate to the Rev. John Sargent, Rector of Lavington, with Graffham and Upwaltham. Soon events, following closely upon each other, dramatically changed Manning's position. By Easter 1833 he was engaged to marry one of the beautiful daughters of his rector. Unfortunately, John Sargent was not able to officiate at that marriage and share the joy of the newly wed; he died on 3 May 1833. Manning's marriage to Caroline Sargent took place on 7 November 1833, with Samuel Wilberforce – married in his turn to Caroline's sister, Emily – officiating at the ceremony. By then Manning was already Rector of Lavington. That was to be his home until 1850, and he came to love deeply the place and its people. Years later, already a Catholic, he still spoke of his attachment to Lavington: 'I loved [...] the little church under a green hillside, where the morning and evening prayer and the music of the English Bible, for seventeen years became a part of my soul. Nothing is more beautiful in the natural order; and if there were no eternal world, I could have made it my home.'⁴

Manning's theological baggage on arrival at Lavington could fit neatly in a couple of brief sentences: 'When I came to Lavington in 1833 I believed, as I always did, in Baptismal Regeneration: I had no view of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood

of Christ: and no idea of the Church.'⁵ It had been traditionally asserted that Manning, starting from an Evangelical standpoint, moved quickly into a High Church doctrinal position. Christopher O'Gorman was the first, to my knowledge, to advance the view that Manning's doctrinal development begins to make sense when one considers it as 'the waking up from a merely nominal old high churchmanship, into what became the fullness of the historical Catholic faith.'⁶ Additional evidence seems to confirm this conclusion.

That there were Evangelical influences in Manning's religious make up is, however, undeniable. He himself confessed that, towards the end of his stay in Oxford, his Evangelical friends had introduced him to 'puritan' books of devotion. These had a great influence on Manning, turning him towards what he called 'personal religion'. He embraced their devotional practices but never received their doctrinal opinions.⁷ In later life he was to consider that the Evangelical and High Church parties corresponded respectively to the inner and the outer life of the Church. They had become detached at the Reformation, going their own separate ways: spirituality, on the one hand; doctrine and external observances, on the other. As a result, the Low Church had no objective truth, the High Church little subjective religion.⁸

Robert Wilberforce would say in 1851 that the nineteenth-century revival in the Church of England from the prostration of the previous one hundred years had been an act of divine Providence in two stages. First, the Evangelical movement, towards the end of the eighteenth century, had brought about a revival of the spiritual life of the Church. The effect of this renewal had been a great increase of religious earnestness in many hearts. In God's plans, this was aimed at giving the Church the inner strength to withstand the assaults of the spirit of the age, and to effect the doctrinal revival of the second quarter of the century.⁹ Wilberforce's thesis, in its broad generalisation, may be a matter for discussion. However, when applied to Manning, it seems to describe his religious progress well: a spiritual revival of clear Evangelical tone and origin provided the basis on which he built

⁵ Manning to Samuel Wilberforce, 20 Oct. 1850 (copy), *Manning MSS Bod.*, c. 656, fo. 55.

⁶ C. O'Gorman, 'A History of Henry Manning's Religious Opinions, 1808-1832', *Recusant History*, xxi (Oct. 1992), 156.

⁷ Manning to Miss Maurice, 30 Aug. 1850, *Manning MSS Bod.*, c. 659, fo. 160.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ R. Wilberforce, 'The Evangelical and Tractarian Movements. A Charge to the Clergy of the East Riding, 1851' (London: Murray, 1851), 5-11.

³ J. Garbett, 'The Church of England and the Church of Rome. A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Chichester, August 5, 1851, at the Primary Visitation' (London: Murray, 1851), 1-2. Julius Hare, Archdeacon of Lewes, also referred with affection to Manning in his 1851 Charge ('The Contest with Rome' in *Charges to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Lewes at the Ordinary Visitations from the Year 1840 to 1854*, iii (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1856), 10-12).

⁴ Quoted in E. S. Purcell, *Life of Cardinal Manning*, i (4th ed., London: Macmillan, 1896), 125.

his High Church doctrinal positions.

The peace of his Lavington retreat offered Manning an atmosphere conducive to study and contemplation. His habits did not pass unnoticed to his Lavington flock. He was, in the description of one of them, "an out-of-the-way serious man. Always reading and walking up and down in front a-reading as if seemingly he couldn't find no rest. [...] Always drove a pair of greys. Old John Tribe he used to have to stop 'em half an hour together while he got out and sat down somewhere and took no notice of 'em one."¹⁰ Manning's theology was forged in that course of reading and meditation. removed – for the most part – from external influences. From the first, he laid a claim to intellectual independence: he had reached the positions he held by himself; no school could claim him as its own. Manning's deep desire for God and for truth, and his concern for his flock, were the forces impelling him in a search which was to lead him to the Catholic Church.

Two questions forced themselves upon his mind in the early days of his ministry. He felt first the need for a divine commission, and asked himself: 'What right have you to be teaching, admonishing, reforming, rebuking others? By what authority do you lift the latch of a poor's man door and enter and sit down and begin to instruct or to correct him?'¹¹ Manning did frequently lift the latches of his parishioners' doors. The records he kept of each family – containing brief descriptions of character, religious practice and the like – showed a pastor familiar with his flock and their problems.¹² Years later, his diocesan work, and sometimes his poor health, forced Manning to absent himself from his parish. The care of his flock, however, came first in his list of concerns, and he would excuse himself from attending important meetings away from Lavington whenever any of his parishioners was in need of his attention.¹³ In 1845 the care of his flock was one of the reasons adduced by Manning for rejecting the offer of the Sub-Almonership to the Archbishop of York (Almoner to the Queen), just vacated by Samuel Wilberforce's elevation to the episcopate: it would have taken him from his

¹⁰ Quoted in S. Leslie, *Henry Edward Manning. His Life and Labours* (2nd ed., London: Burns and Oates, 1921), 46.

¹¹ 'Journal 1878-82', quoted in Purcell, *Manning*, i, 112.

¹² *Manning MSS Bod.*, Eng. Misc., c. 1395. Among his parishioners Manning had some dissenters, belonging for the most part to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion; drunkenness seems to have been another of the problems he had to deal with. See also Chichester Diocesan Papers, 'Grafham. Details of Families (1751-1851)', West Sussex C.R.O., Par 93/7/2.

¹³ Manning to Hare, letters dated 4, 8 and 9 Sept. 1841, *Manning MSS Bod.*, c. 653, fos 164-9.

parishioners at several important liturgical times, particularly Passion Week and Easter.¹⁴

The poor agricultural labourers who made up the greater part of his flock were the object of Manning's particular pastoral concern. He felt deeply the harshness of their condition and, in his 1845 Charge he spoke eloquently about their plight and how to ameliorate it.¹⁵ We have from his pen several accounts of his dealings with his people. Among them, the following moving description of the death of one Mr Long, a shepherd, in January 1845. Manning had given him in December a book with a print of the Good Shepherd and paid him several visits during the month. One day in the new year Manning went to him. The shepherd, pointing to the print, said: "I hope he will have me like that", – the sheep on His shoulders – I said, "He has you like that [...]" He does not wait for the lost sheep to come to Him, but He goes out to seek till He finds it." He said "No, no, He don't wait for he to come to He, He goes after he; and I hope I shall not give Him much trouble." Long had been a shepherd on the South Downs all his life; and he had had trouble enough in seeking the sheep that wandered and were lost. He then took up the print and said, "I shall be glad to see that Man."¹⁶ He died that night.

The second question in need of an urgent answer followed on the first: how to ascertain the divinity of the message he was to deliver to his flock, to guide them in truth rather than along the path of error and evil? The charge of souls sharpened his sense of responsibility.¹⁷ Manning's answers to these questions grew out of study and contemplation. Christ had come to witness to the truth: 'The truth [that] will make you free' (Jn 8:32). Only truth contains the saving message and power of Christ: 'Truth bears the stamp of God, and truth changes man to the likeness of God.'¹⁸ Opinion has no power to do so. Manning could not settle for any less than the full truth: 'I am too much of a Platonist to hold truth moderately,' he wrote to Julius Hare in 1840, 'I should as soon think of holding the multiplication table in

¹⁴ 'Diary', quoted in Purcell, *Manning*, i, 278-9.

¹⁵ H.E. Manning, *A Charge delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester, in July 1845* (London: Murray, 1845), 43-4. In 1872 he was to share a platform with Joseph Arch and others at a meeting in Exeter Hall to support the recently founded Agricultural Union; he was the only prelate of any denomination to do so.

¹⁶ Quoted in Purcell, *Manning*, i, 291-2. He also left recorded of some visits which had been resented (see D. Newsome, *The parting of Friends* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1993), 232).

¹⁷ H.E. Manning, *The Rule of Faith* (2nd ed., London: Murray, 1838), 12.

¹⁸ H.E. Manning, *The Unity of the Church* (London: Murray, 1842), 236-7.

moderation.¹⁹

He aimed not just at finding out what were the specific doctrines of the Gospel, 'but what is the *rule* by which we may ascertain them',²⁰ what is the test which can determine that a truth has been revealed by God. He dealt with the subject of the rule of faith in the sermon he preached in 1838 at Chichester Cathedral. In it, Manning judged the doctrine of private judgement as intellectually deficient and without scriptural foundation. Besides, practice had proved it untenable: the multifarious and discordant interpretations of the Scriptures had generated the innumerable sects that populated England. He started his argument from a basic question: was there no faith before the Scriptures were written? To make faith dependent on the Scriptures would imply that one could not truly speak of a Christian faith until the canon of the Sacred books had been not only completed but also received by all the different particular churches. That is, well into the second century. This, to Manning's mind, was patently absurd. He affirmed, on the contrary, that the faith of the Church preceded the writing of the New Testament books and the formation of the canon. The Gospels and other writings of the New Testament – as they were written and received – were read and understood by the Church all over the world in the sense of the apostolic teaching they had previously received and now held. The original Apostolic Tradition of the Church attested both Scripture and the sense of it.²¹

Manning used a similar argument many years later, when, already a Catholic, he confronted fellow Catholics who claimed that the only truths that were of necessary belief were those which had been solemnly promulgated by the dogmatic definition of a Council. Manning's response at the time was to ask: was there no faith before the first ecumenical council in 325 AD? Until then, were Christians free to believe whatever they pleased? And, after Nicea, was the divinity of Jesus Christ the only truth that Christians were bound to believe to qualify as such? No, he answered, faith was not dependant for its existence on the definitions of the Councils. It depended on the preaching of the Apostles and the constant teaching of the Church. By his *Sermon* and the *Appendix* on the rule of faith Manning nailed his colours firmly to the High Church mast. They showed him occupying common ground with the Oxford Tractarians, although he was not

¹⁹ Manning to Hare, 24 Aug. 1840, *Manning MSS Bod.*, c. 653, fo. 18.

²⁰ Manning, *Rule*, 13.

²¹ H.E. Manning, *The Rule of Faith. Appendix to a Sermon* (2nd ed., London: Murray, 1838), 28ff.

one of them. Manning had read himself into those High Church positions which the men at Oxford were defending and developing at the time.

Both the *Sermon* and its *Appendix* had been written against the background of the death of Caroline Manning on 24 July 1837. His grief was intense, and the great pain of his loss would renew itself at each anniversary of his wife's death. Of this time also is the only known poem by his pen. Manning sung in it to Lavington's sweet woodland wall: it had sheltered the love of wife and family; now many of that happy company were dead, called to rest within its deep still shadow. For him, the poem ended, 'Regrets are quelled, despondency repress / And my heart longs with a world weary sigh, / that thou wouldst take a stranger to thy breast, / And I might join this peaceful company'. The poem was dated 'Lavington Church Yard, 1837 August'.²² There, sitting on the low wall by his wife's tomb, he would also write many of his sermons.

After his wife's death, Henry Manning immersed himself in incessant work to deaden his pain. He put a new impetus into the visitation of his parishioners, and, from July 1838, started daily services and weekly communion in the newly renovated Graffham church. He also dedicated more time to study. He was still without a curate, and he did not take one up till years later, when the weight of diocesan business began to tell on him.²³ Manning's desire to absorb himself in work soon found a further outlet. Bishop Otter – appointed in 1836, on the translation of Bishop Maltby to Durham – was looking for help to carry out his plans to renew the religious life of the diocese. He appointed Julius Hare Archdeacon of Lewes, and found in Manning a willing and capable collaborator, ready to take on some of the work that the aging Archdeacon Webber of Chichester was no longer able to shoulder.

Archdeacon of Chichester

These were years of incessant activity, and the pace only increased with his appointment in December 1840 as Archdeacon. The new Bishop of Chichester, Philip Nicholas Shuttleworth, until then Warden of New College, Oxford, had distinguished himself as a latitudinarian and anti-Tractarian, friendly with the

²² Merton College Archives, Oxford, E.L-23B (photocopy of the original).

²³ Manning to Laprimaudaye, 16 June 1847, quoted in Purcell, *Manning*, i, 468.

Whig administration. On his appointment to Chichester, Shuttleworth had been warned by the Evangelical Bishop Sumner of Chester to beware of Manning and Mariot, the Tractarian principal of Chichester Theological College, who 'had dominated' the late Bishop Otter.²⁴ Purcell added, in his peculiarly unreliable way, that Mrs Shuttleworth showed her opposition to the appointment in a scene worthy of Mrs. Proudie of Barchester.²⁵ Be that as it may, the new bishop, in search of a capable and safe pair of hands, seems to have been able to overcome the personal and external circumstances which might have stood in the way of Manning's appointment.

Manning advancement was not bought at the price of his convictions. He was not a party man in the narrow sense of the word, and this made it possible for him to cooperate with people of rather different theological backgrounds in those ventures he considered for the good of the Church. More than once he had been, and was to be, in disagreement with his bishops – whether Otter, Shuttleworth or Gilbert – and he did not hide those differences from them. Otter had not been happy with Manning's sermon on the rule of faith, as tending to alienate the Evangelicals, and Manning published the *Appendix* against his advice. Years later, in a letter to Bishop Gilbert, he declared his non-concurrence with certain passages in the bishop's charge. This, he added, had been the reason for not exercising his privilege as archdeacon of requesting its publication: he could not have done so without compromising his integrity of word and deed. However, Manning was always careful not to air these differences in public.²⁶ His correspondence with the liberal Julius Hare, his fellow archdeacon, is a vivid example of the tensions created by deep differences of theological opinion between two men who, at the same time, had a great appreciation for each other and could cooperate at a practical level. Their letters, however, together with expressions of mutual esteem, are full of sadness at the growing chasm between them as theological positions became more polarised in the 1840s.

Manning performed his office of archdeacon with his usual energy and sense of responsibility. He laboured incessantly to renew the spiritual life of his people. As

²⁴ Newman to T. Mozley, letter dated 5 Dec. 1840, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, G. Tracey ed., vii, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 460.

²⁵ Purcell, *Manning*, i, 180.

²⁶ Otter to Manning, letters dated Aug. and Sept. 1838, also Manning to Gilbert, 23 Oct. 1844 (Copy), *Manning MSS Bod.*, c. 653, fos 440-3 and 556-62.

archdeacon, he promoted frequent communion among the clergy of the archdeaconry, and he kept a record of the number of times communion was administered in the different parishes. It shows that things were slowly changing, the archdeacon leading from the front. Almost half of the churches on record had communion four times a year; monthly communion was administered in fewer than a quarter of churches. Manning's own churches at Graffham and Woolavington were the only ones which had communion every fortnight, and Upwaltham had it six times a year.²⁷ Most of his parishioners became regular communicants.²⁸ His example, and the resulting good effect, encouraged others to make communion more frequent in their parishes.²⁹ He also encouraged the clergy to revive those rubrics enjoined by the Prayer Book which had previously been neglected.

There was, however, one need he could hardly provide for. The lack of a penitential discipline in the Church on England – and the obstacles set on the path to its reintroduction – was a serious concern to Manning. He felt that many of the ills of the Anglican Church were the result of its abandonment, and that its restoration was a necessary condition for doing great and abiding work for God.³⁰ He soon started to hear confessions, although with considerable discretion. This volume of pastoral and ecclesiastical work did not prevent Manning from continuing his theological speculations. His book on the unity of the Church, one of its more carefully crafted works, was published in 1842. That same year appeared his first volume of sermons. He was to publish three more volumes of sermons before conversion to Rome and each one of them went through several editions.

In his *Unity of the Church* Manning's focus was closely connected with his concern with conviction that truth is the means by which God's image is impressed on man. Unity, he would write, 'is the sacrament of truth; by unity it

²⁷ 'Minutes of Chapters of Rural Deans. Archdeaconry of Chichester (1841-1844)', *Manning MSS Bod.*, Eng. Misc. c. 873; also Eng. Misc. 875, fos. 12-14.

²⁸ Manning kept a careful record of the number of communicants at Graffham. In 1840 he recorded that of 230 people, who were or could have been confirmed, 127 were communicants; in 1843 the number of communicants was 150. The pages after 1844 have been excised from the book (*Graffham. Details of Families* (1751-1851), West Sussex C.R.O., Par. 93/7/1, 128-36).

²⁹ Hare to Manning, 30 July 1841, *Manning MSS Bod.*, c. 653, fos 148-9.

³⁰ Letters to Gladstone, 11 Nov. and 13 Dec. 1841, *Manning MSS Pitts*, box 1, folder 6, Pitts Theology Library, Emory University, Atlanta. That same year, quoting Thorndike, he had made a passing reference to this theme in his Visitation Charge.

is conserved and transmitted.³¹ The question he tried to address in the book was: to what an extent the divisions among Christians had damaged unity and what consequences this had for the preservation and transmission of revealed truth? Manning distinguished between objective (or organic) unity and subjective (or moral) unity. The first, he thought, consisted in the unity of doctrine and discipline under Episcopal governance. Episcopal succession was a guarantee of doctrinal orthodoxy. Organic unity could not be lost without damaging the perception of truth and the reception of grace. On the other hand, the moral unity of charity and communion of the different particular churches among themselves, under the rule of their respective bishops, although intended by God as the visible expression of organic unity, could be lost without loss of truth. Objective unity would preserve open the lines of communion with heaven, along which truth and grace reach man, even when the bonds of charity and communion among particular churches had been broken. Moral unity, although important, could be forfeited without forfeiting objective unity.

A Time of Crisis

Although he was not directly involved in the Oxford Movement, its crisis between 1841 and 1845 had considerable influence on Manning. He was worried by what he saw as the Romanising tendencies of the young generation of Tractarians writing for the *British Critic*, and he inveighed against them in his University Sermon of 5 November 1843. Only a few weeks before the sermon, his confidence in the Oxford men had been even more rudely shaken by a letter from Newman, revealing that Newman's allegiance to the Church of England was almost at an end.

The University Sermon was a passionate defence of the position of the Church of England, and of the principles on which it was founded. It also contained an open attack against the Church of Rome. Its virulence surprised some of his friends. Pusey wrote to Manning criticising its tone. Manning was unrepentant: the men of the *British Critic*, and those who shared their ideas, did not know the principles of the Anglican Church; these needed to be reasserted; he, for his part, could not behave in respect of principles as children do with gardening, constantly uprooting tender plants to make sure that they were healthy and growing.

³¹Manning, *Unity of the Church*, 347.

Still, those principles – dearly held and staunchly defended – were destined to enter into crisis soon enough. The main and almost definitive blow to Manning's Anglican stance was dealt, indirectly, by the publication, in October 1845, of Newman's *The Development of Christian Doctrine*. The book presented Newman's solution to a difficulty which had troubled him for years: the fact that developments in doctrine and discipline which could be detected in the early centuries of the Church seemed to run in the face of the principle 'what has been believed always, everywhere and by all'. This principle referred the Christian to the faith of the undivided Church of antiquity, and left no room for variations and developments between early and late Fathers. In the *Development* Newman put forward the view that the doctrines of the Church had developed, as a result of internal and external causes, both in a more accurate statement of the doctrine itself and in the new conclusions which followed from the application of reason to the said doctrines. These developments were legitimate, and could become a matter for belief, provided they harmonised and were consistent with the revealed truths from which they originate, and were professed unanimously by the members of the Church. Living organisms, and the Church was one, grow and develop, and yet they do not lose their identity. Development legitimised the cult of Our Lady and many other Roman doctrines rejected at the Reformation.

Manning read the book, and, at first, dismissed it as a wonderful intellectual work, but subtle even to excess. He rejected the idea of development on the basis of the principle of Vincent of Lerins: 'what has been believed always, everywhere and by all.' In its generally accepted meaning this meant that one could not be bound to believe more than what was believed in antiquity. The truths making up this belief were to be gleaned from the testimonies of Tradition, particularly from the writings of the Fathers of the Church and the early Councils. Nothing could be added as a matter of necessary belief for salvation. In any case, Manning added, if there were to be developments, who was to judge whether particular developments were right or wrong? *Quo iudice?*

Newman's book had, however, planted a seed of doubt in Manning's mind. Newman, through his study of the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church, had reached conclusions which Manning wholly rejected. Still, he had done so by using what Manning admitted to be the Anglican rule of faith: Scripture and Tradition. This, he would write later, 'opened my eyes to one fact, namely that I

had laid down only one half of the subject. I had found the *Rule* but not the *Judge*. It was evident that to put Scripture and Antiquity into the hands of the individual is as much Private Judgement as to put Scripture alone.³²

His unsettlement grew during 1846. In the end, continuous work and mental anxiety caused his physical collapse in February 1847. The months of illness and convalescence which followed offered the opportunity for study and reflection he needed. It was at that time that he discovered the answer to the question which was constantly in his mind. He found the key to the solution of the problem almost accidentally, while reading a book by a Spanish theologian of the sixteenth century. 'I remember,' he wrote years later, 'how the words of Melchior Canus used to return upon me "Consensus sanctorum omnium sensus Spiritus Sancti est" (De Locis Theol., lib. viii [actually lib. vii], c.3.' [The consent of the Fathers on a particular sentence is the sense of the Holy Spirit.] What, at first, had only been a faint perception soon became a firm conviction: 'that the Holy Spirit perpetually and infallibly guides the Church, and speaks by its voice.'³³ It was a sort of sudden illumination. The words of his appendix to the *Rule of Faith* acquired an unsuspected meaning for him: 'The universal tradition of all ages is no less than the voice of God.'³⁴

This was a truth which demanded a larger theological context. Manning found its proper setting within the Scriptural doctrine of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. He described his new vision of the Church as a communion and his new perception of infallibility in the fourth volume of *Sermons*, published in 1850. This is arguably his finest theological treatise, and in it Manning appears at his best as an original thinker. However, this volume of sermons has since remained largely ignored, relegated to a sort of theological limbo. Catholics dismissed it as the work of an Anglican, while for Anglicans it was a work which – although steeped in Scriptural and Patristic knowledge – was tainted by the Romanising of its author.

Manning intended his fourth volume of *Sermons* as a manifesto of his deepest convictions. He told Mary Wilberforce, sister of Caroline Manning, that he planned 'to publish as full a book on the subject of infallibility as I have a light to

³² Manning to R. Wilberforce, 22 Jan. 1851, *Manning MSS Bod.*, c.656, fo. 107.

³³ H.E. Manning, *Sermons on Ecclesiastical Subjects*, i (Dublin: James Duffy, 1869), 6-7.

³⁴ Manning, *Appendix*, 133.

make. And by that book to take my path.³⁵ His new perception of the Church embraced the whole of God's salvific plan. In it, the divinisation of man was to take place as a result of his incorporation into Christ's Mystical Body through Baptism. This incorporation is the work of the Holy Spirit: the agent of the union of the humanity and the divinity in Christ is also the agent of man's union with Christ through the Sacraments. In the Mystical Body, Christ is the Head, and the Holy Spirit is to the Body what the soul is to the human person: the principle of life and activity. By the action of the Spirit, all the privileges of the Head descend to the rest of the body. Manning used the image of the oil, pouring down from Aaron's head onto his beard and over his sacerdotal vestments, to represent that flowing down of grace from Christ onto his body, the Church. 'The unity, holiness, infallibility, etc. of the Head are communicated to the body. The Church, as a result, 'is one, because He is one; holy, because He is holy; catholic, because His presence is local no more; apostolic, because He still sends His own servants; indefectible, because He is the Life; unerring, because He is the Truth.'³⁶ Manning's idea of the unity of the Church was also transformed. He came to see the unity of love as one of the essential characteristics of the Church: 'love is one of the names of Christ and of His Church. (...) The unity of love is a type of the unity of nature.'³⁷

He used very similar words in 1862, writing as a Catholic: the Church 'became one with a twofold unity, essential and intrinsic, visible and external, because Jesus, its Head, is one and indivisible. It became indefectible, because Jesus is life eternal. It became infallible, because Jesus is eternal truth'. The intelligence of the Church 'is perpetually illuminated by His intelligence,' and the voice of the Church 'is governed by His voice.'³⁸ The guarantee of the infallibility of the Church is the perpetual presence of the Holy Spirit: he speaks in the Church through human lips. As a result of the Holy Spirit's presence, unity, holiness, indefectibility, and infallibility become essential properties of the Church; their existence within it does not depend on human will but on God's unchangeable will; they are not conditional on man's faithfulness but on God's.

³⁵ Manning to M. Wilberforce, 2 Dec. 1849, *Manning MSS Bod.*, c.655, fo. 136.

³⁶ H.E. Manning, *Sermons*, iv (London: Murray, 1850), 103.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, 290.

³⁸ Manning, *Sermons on Ecclesiastical Subjects*, i, 419.

The fourth volume of *Sermons* also dealt with a topic which was to reappear, in a different context, during his Catholic years: the case of those who, without fault of their own, were separated from the Church. This separation might have occurred either because truth was not proposed to them or because their prejudice was so strong that prevented them from recognising truth when confronted with it. As an Anglican, Manning was thinking of the Dissenters; when he became a Catholic, he also included Greek Orthodox and Anglicans. He affirmed in 1850 that 'no ignorance of truth is a personal sin before God, except that ignorance which springs from personal sin.'³⁹ The Holy Spirit, Manning thought, although communicating the fullness of divine truth and life to the Church, had not confined his operations within its boundaries. He was also active outside the Church, in the world at large, and his presence and action would necessarily be more intense among those who had been regenerated by Baptism. The stern dictum 'outside the Church there is no salvation' was softened in Manning's thought by his conviction that those who sought the truth in obedience to the Spirit belonged to the soul of the Church. And he recognized with joy the existence of true holiness in other denominations, and even among non-Christians. Indeed, for Manning, the Spirit is also present and active in every good work and deed. Manning, the Catholic Archbishop, could identify the Holy Spirit's action in initiatives promoted by Dissenters, Anglicans, and even non-believers, and could share a platform with them without qualms of conscience.

However, from 1847 to 1851 Manning's qualms of conscience were plentiful. Was the Church of England the true Church: one, holy and infallible? She did not claim infallibility. As a matter of fact, she denied the very notion of the infallibility of the Church. Had she forgotten this one of its prerogatives, as she seemed to have forgotten for a while the divine origin of her powers and commission? Little by little, the conviction that the true Church was to be found in Rome made its way into his mind. But Manning – like others in his predicament – was afraid of falling prey to the very evil he had been fighting against for so long: private judgement. As others had done before him, he seems to have waited like the prophet Samuel for the three calls from God before answering his summons. He saw the first in the appointment as Bishop of Hereford of Hampden, a man whose doctrine had been condemned as non-orthodox by the University of Oxford.⁴⁰ The second call came

³⁹ Manning, *Sermons*, iv, 75.

⁴⁰ His 1848 Charge tried to present the incident in the best possible light for the Church of England: Hampden had not been declared heretical by a proper ecclesiastical court (H.E. Manning, *A Charge delivered at the Ordinary*

in the form of the Gorham judgment, in which the State arrogated to itself – without formal complaint on the part of the Church – the definition of what was orthodox doctrine. The establishing of a Catholic hierarchy in England by Pius IX in the autumn of 1850 was the third: here was a Church claiming infallibility in defining doctrine, independent from the civil power for the exercise of its functions, and universal in its spread and mission.

The Day of Decision

Ironically, in the excitement generated by the so-called 'Papal Aggression', it fell on Manning, as Archdeacon of Chichester, to call a meeting of the Chichester clergy to express outrage at the Pope's action. Before the event, he signified to Bishop Gilbert his disagreement with the proceedings and mentioned his decision to resign, either at once or after calling the meeting and stating in it his dissent. The bishop desired him to take the latter course. The meeting took place on 23 November 1850. At the end, Henry Edward Manning protested his disagreement with the resolution passed against Papal Aggression, and resigned as Archdeacon of Chichester. He told them that he would never forget those years, nor their brotherly love, kindness and friendliness. 'My dear old friend, the Dean [Chandler] was crying, and many others. So we ended and parted.'⁴¹ On 27 November he took part in the consecration of the restored Church at Lavington. Bishop Wilberforce preached in the morning and Manning in the evening. What had been meant to be a joyful occasion was marked by the sadness of the impending loss. It was one of his last acts as Rector of Lavington.

Manning moved to London early in December. At the little chapel in Buckingham Palace Road he attended for the last time a service in the Church of England, accompanied by Gladstone. He could not go up to take communion. On 24 March Manning attended his first Catholic service on English soil: compline, sermon and Benediction at St George's (Southwark). The following day he executed before a notary his resignation of Lavington and Graffham, and of the archdeaconry of Chichester. He was received into the Catholic Church on Passion Sunday, 6 April

Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester, in July 1848 (London: Murray, 1848). The argument, however, did not fully satisfy him.

⁴¹ Note dated 1885, quoted in Purcell, *Manning*, i, 579–80.

1851.⁴²

Manning went back to Lavington in the summer of that year to collect some personal belongings, in particular, his library. By then, there was a new incumbent at Lavington. Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, the patron of the living, had appointed Richard William Randall (later Dean of Chichester) as Rector. Randall, a man of High Church credentials and Tractarian sympathies, found himself in an unenviable situation. He left in his diary a record of his feelings on the occasion:

– Friday 29 August 1851: 'This same Friday morning last year I left Lavington after a visit to the Bishop, little thinking that in a year I should be living here as Rector of the parish. Poor H.E.M.[.] who would have thought of my taking his place in the little Church where he had taught for so many years, and where he read during my stay those lessons out of S. John's Epistles, every letter of which he seemed to be endeavouring to stamp on his life? If ever the spirit of love were in any man it seemed to be in him, and now there are words of warning in those epistles which we must apply to him since his unhappy fall.

– Monday 1 September: 'Poor H.E.M. arrived about 8 p[m] this evening to pack up his books, etc. Again the sad change is forced on one. Last year I was visitor here, he rector; now he is a visitor in his own house.

– Tuesday Sept 2. Matins at 6. For the first time probably the bell called and H.E.M. neither went, nor wished to go to the poor little widowed Church. What would I not give that the sin of schism might be made plain to him, by these outward tokens of separation! Even old Lintott ['A true Christian', Manning had written of him in the notes on his parishioners] says he felt inclined to tell him he ought to come. All this makes one feel heavy and wretched, as if one were dying in sight of us, and we unable to save him.'⁴³

He was not the only one who felt sad. Manning himself was not spared the sadness of the separation. Four months later, already studying at Rome, he wrote in his diary his thoughts about his present condition and about Lavington. He found himself at forty-two living among youths, a stranger among foreigners; he had broken almost every old relationship in the world, and it was like beginning life all

⁴² Manning's 'Recollections' and 'Diary 1851' quoted in Purcell, *Manning*, i, 617 and 628; see also vol. ii, 12.

⁴³ R.W. Randall, 'Diary', *Randall Papers*, Pusey House, Oxford.

over again. This made the memories of Lavington ever more poignant. On 12 December 1851 he wrote in his diary: 'What memories of Lavington, and Sunday night, and of Advent. But all is in God's hands. That was a time of peace, as the time before [while his wife was living] was a time of beauty and of happiness. Now it is all three, but with reality, sharpness, loneliness with God, and a sense of certainty and of eternity. I used always to feel a self-reproach. I was full of theories of infallibility and unity and of the priestly life, but was in heresy and schism and inaction. Something always broke my peace. As I used to walk up and down that room at Lavington I used to feel a reproach go to my soul. Certainly, if there were no such thing in the world as the Catholic Church, it would have been a blessed life.'⁴⁴

Rome and the Vatican Council I

The peace of his Roman sojourn was short-lived. England called him back, and there were still many a battle to fight. He found that there was a school among Catholics, influenced by German ideas, which implicitly suggested the subjection of faith to rationalist historical criticism, pretending that it was the role of history to define the faith of the Church by collating it from the historical monuments of antiquity. It was a ghost from the past, one that Manning had thought definitively exorcised. Men like Dollinger or Acton were trying to introduce into the Catholic Church the evil Manning had identified and fought during his last years as an Anglican: they had appointed themselves high priests of the new science of historical criticism which was to substitute the hierarchy of the Church in the definition of orthodox doctrine, of the truth revealed by God and of its meaning. Manning's answer to the question was clear and uncompromising: 'Human history is neither the source nor the channel of revelation.'⁴⁵ A Catholic does not deduce faith from history or antiquity: the faith was revealed and taught before the Church had a history or an antiquity. The Church taught it. The Holy Spirit who lived in the Church spoke by her lips. The Spirit continues teaching it now. The Church was the rule of faith then; she is the rule of faith now. 'The enunciation of the faith by the living Church of this hour', Manning wrote, 'is the maximum evidence, both

⁴⁴ Purcell, *Manning*, ii, 11.

⁴⁵ H.E. Manning, *The Vatican Council and its Definitions. A Pastoral Letter to the Clergy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1870), 125.

natural and supernatural, as to the fact and the contents of the original revelation.⁴⁶

Those battles were not to be confined to the narrow sphere of English Catholicism; they were also to be fought in the wider field of the Universal Church. Pius IX had convoked the Council to deal with the problems the modern world posed to the Church; it was opened on 8 December 1869. Vatican Council I (1869-70) offered Manning – Archbishop of Westminster since 1865 – the possibility of playing a leading role on a vastly larger stage than the one he had been used to.

The Council was cut short by the Italian invasion of Rome. Many documents, on a great variety of issues, had been prepared for the study of the bishops attending the Council but it had barely time to publish two Constitutions: the first, on Faith and Reason; the second, on the Roman Pontiff. It dealt, however, with two fundamental topics, central to Manning's speculations since his Anglican days. He was well placed to influence the proceedings. Manning was member of the Deputation *De Fide*, entrusted with the work of drafting both Constitutions, and also of the Deputation *De Postulatis*, which played a determining role in the direction of the Council. In both of them, as well as inside and outside the Council's chamber, Manning aired his concerns and battled for those principles he felt fundamental for the life of the Church.

The Constitution on Faith and Reason was the first approved by the Council. It defended the power of natural reason in reaching physical and metaphysical truth; it also dealt at length on the nature of God's revelation, its supernatural character (transcending all knowledge accessible to human reason), and the relationship of faith and science. Manning's role in the shaping of the Constitution on Faith was by no means negligible. As a member of the Deputation in charge of drafting it, he introduced some important elements into the final text and tried hard to reinforce others. One of his amendments shaped the definitive formulation of canon 6, condemning those who affirmed that, when an apparent contradiction between reason and faith had been discovered, it would be legitimate for Catholics to doubt 'with suspended assent, the faith which they had already received under the magisterium of the Church, until they shall have obtained a scientific demonstration of the credibility and truth of their faith.'⁴⁷ The canon had the primary objective of condemning those who claimed that an adult faith and

⁴⁶ H.E. Manning, *The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost* (6th ed, London: Burns and Oates, 1909), 214.

⁴⁷ J.D. Mansi (ed.), *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima Collectio* (Arlhem & Leipzig, 1923-1927), vol. II, col. 435D. Manning's translation in *Vatican Council and its Definitions*, 202.

theology required first doubting one's faith in order to build it up afterwards on a rational basis. Manning also saw in it an explicit rejection of the claims advanced by those who, on the basis of the new scientific theories and the findings of the so-called school of historical criticism, felt justified in questioning the faith of the Church and the recent pronouncements of the magisterium.

Manning was also intent on clarifying the authority of the ordinary magisterium of the Church. His efforts, in collaboration with some other Council Fathers, were partly rewarded. The final text of the Constitution included a clause stating that, 'all those things are to be believed with divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the Word of God, written or handed down, and which the Church, either by a solemn judgment, or by her ordinary and universal magisterium, proposes for belief as having been divinely revealed.' This positive injunction was complemented in the same text by a negative one: 'it is not sufficient to shun heretical pravity, unless those errors be also diligently avoided which more or less nearly approach it,' and had been condemned as such by the Holy See.⁴⁸

Manning, however, made a name for himself first and foremost as one of the main proponents of the definition of papal infallibility. He had started campaigning for the definition as soon as the Council was announced. His untiring efforts to promote it during the Council, and the influence he exerted on the proceedings, gained for him the appellation of 'the whip of the infallibilist majority.'

It is not easy to determine when and how Manning became a firm supporter of papal infallibility, a doctrine which does not seem to have been part of the baggage he brought with him into the Catholic Church. During his last Anglican years Manning had firmly held the infallibility of the Church, as one of its essential properties, but would go no further. It seems that it was only during his sojourn in Rome – in contact with Roman theologians – that he came to make his own their doctrine of papal infallibility. He soon discovered that this doctrine complemented the doctrine of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ which he had developed during his last Anglican years. Manning saw a parallelism between the invisible mystical Body of Christ and its visible presence on earth. In the Mystical Body, the privileges of the head flow down onto the whole body. So it was in the visible

⁴⁸ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, vol. II, cols 432C and 436. Manning's translation in *Vatican Council and its Definitions*, 198 and 203.

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Church: the visible head of the Church, the Pope, receives those privileges from Christ, and from him they flow onto the rest of the visible Church. On these grounds, he considered the definition of papal infallibility as fundamental for the defence of the infallibility of the Church. Remove the infallibility of the Pope and the infallibility of the Church, deprived of its foundation, would come crashing down.

The Council defined the Pope's infallibility, but it did not make its own Manning's theological vision about the infallibility of the Church depending on the infallibility of the Pope. Manning was, however, satisfied. As he wrote in one of his later biographical notes: 'On my return from the Council I wrote a Pastoral which recorded all I thought it was necessary. This done, I never named Council or Definition or Infallibility. The Day was won and the Truth was safe, like it was after the Council of Nicea. We had no need to talk about it.'⁴⁹ The key-stone of the arch of the infallibility of the Church had been clearly reaffirmed and was firmly set.

Manning's intellectual journey had removed him from the familiar surroundings he had thought were always to be his own. His love for Lavington and its people survived the passing of years and the estrangement brought about by his becoming a Catholic. In 1838 he acknowledged in his diary how an 'irresistible local affection' for Lavington had grown on him. He had previously thought that self-denial would make all places alike; now he knew better. Love, grief, toil, thought, memories and associations, had rooted him to Lavington. There was 'only one place unlike all others, and', he added, 'that is unchangeable.'⁵⁰ Time would only reinforce this attachment. Many years later he could enter into Randall's feelings at leaving Lavington: 'I can fully understand what you feel at the moment. You have been at Lavington about as long as I was, between 17 and 18 years. It does not take so long a time to make us leave it with great reluctance: and we shall neither find in this world any place like Lavington. I trust we shall find one more beautiful, but that is not in this world. Pray give my kind remembrances to my old people.'⁵¹

⁴⁹ 'Note' dated 18 Sept. 1887, quoted in Purcell, *Manning*, ii, 458.

⁵⁰ 'Journal', quoted in Purcell, *Manning*, i, 441.

⁵¹ Manning to R. Randall, 6 May 1868, *Randall Papers*, Pusey House, Oxford.